

REMARKS

Withdrawn claims 18-29 and 36-53 are cancelled herewith; claims 30-34 have been amended; and claims 54-56 are new. No new matter has been introduced. In particular, support for the amendments to claim 30 is found, e.g., in original claim 27 and in the Specification at page 2, line 16; and support for the amendments to claim 32 is found, e.g., in original claim 50 and in the Specification at page 3, line 20. Amendments to claims 31, 33 and 34 make these dependent claims consistent with the base claim. Support for new claims 54 and 55 is found, e.g., in original claims 28 and 29 and in the Specification at page 2, line 16; and support for new claim 56 is found, e.g., in original claim 22.

Claims 30-31 and 33-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being allegedly anticipated by Pratt, U.S. Patent No. 5,374,474 (“Pratt”), and claim 32 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly obvious over Pratt. Applicants do not agree with either of the rejections, but have nevertheless amended independent claim 30 to further progress prosecution.

As amended, claim 30 features a fibrous material including fibers that includes a cellulosic or lignocellulosic material. The cellulosic or lignocellulosic material has been sheared to the extent that it has a bulk density of less than about 0.5 g/cm³ and at least about 50% of the fibers have a length/diameter ratio of at least about 5. Claims 31-35 and 54-56 all depend directly or indirectly from claim 30.

Generally, Pratt is directed to making composite boards, e.g., paper particle boards, that use recycled paper. While Pratt discloses the word ‘fiber’, it is clear from his Specification that he does not mean a fiber having a substantial length-to-diameter. For example, Pratt discloses at column 3, lines 7-12 that

To produce a paper particle board, only a single stage or machine may be required to reduce the raw material to an appropriate particle size. Bulk density of the refined particle product is preferably from about 2.5 to about 6 pounds per cubic foot. Hammer mills or functionally equivalent machines may be used. (emphasis added)

Applicants : Marshall Medoff et al.
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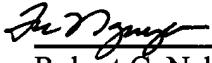
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In Example 1, Pratt uses a hammer mill to make the particles. In fact, a hammer mill is the only apparatus disclosed to produce the raw material for his composites. A hammer mill is a machine used to grind materials into *fine particles*. For example, grain is milled in a hammer mill to produce flour. Thus, although Pratt uses the word 'fiber', he discloses particles. As such, Pratt does not disclose or suggest a fibrous material including fibers in which at least about 50% of the fibers have a length/diameter ratio of at least about 5, as independent claim 30 now requires, but rather discloses only particles that would inherently have low length-to-diameter ratios, e.g., approaching 1. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 30, and all claims depending therefrom are novel and non-obvious over Pratt.

Enclosed is a check for \$120.00 for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 08895-019002.

Respectfully submitted,

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 Tu N. Nguyen, Reg. No. 42,934
Robert C. Nabinger
Reg. No. 33,431

Fish & Richardson P.C.
225 Franklin Street
Boston, MA 02110
Telephone: (617) 542-5070
Facsimile: (617) 542-8906